

# NMCRS lends helping hand to Depot Marines, sailors

STAFF SGT. BENJAMIN N. HAYNES  
PRESS CHIEF

In December 2002, two Marines were traveling more than 900 miles to spend Christmas with their friends and family.

Almost 200 miles into the trip, the engine of the vehicle they were in stopped, leaving them stranded on the highway.

They eventually contacted a tow truck from a small town in South Carolina to transport the vehicle to the nearest mechanic who said he would need more than \$1,000 to replace the engine, and could have the work done a week later.

On top of the cost for repair, the Marines had to rent a vehicle to continue their trip — coming out of pocket more than \$1,400.

These expenses caused a great deal of financial hardship, as car payments, rent and utility bills were also due.

Upon their return, the Marines contacted the Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society for help.

The Society took a look at the Marines’ finances and performed a budget analysis and eventually gave the Marines a check to pay for the engine repairs.

In return, the Marines paid almost \$50 a payday until the “small loan” was repaid, interest free.

For more than 100 years, the NMCRS has been helping Marines, sailors and their families through troubling times such as this through financial, educational, and other assistance.

“The Society is probably best known for the interest-

free loans and grants it provides to eligible recipients when in need,” said Ron Grindle, director of the Depot NMCRS office and retired Marine.

“Not including the scholarship assistance provided to many families, the Parris Island office itself has provided almost \$213,000 in assistance to 320 sailors, Marines and their families last year ... including retirees,” he added.

Those numbers don’t include the non-financial assistance that was provided. Many Society offices, depending on location, have food lockers, thrift shops, visiting nurses, and give budgeting classes (a “Junior Sea Bag” is provided for attending) to those families expecting a baby.

Although sponsored by the Department of the Navy, the Society receives no funding from the government. The work of the Society is supported by an annual fund drive conducted by the Navy and Marine Corps under the auspices of the Secretary of the Navy.

“The goal of each fund drive is two fold,” said Grindle. “First, we want to gain maximum awareness. The Society wants all eligible personnel to know what we can do for them.

“Second, raise those funds needed to sustain the Society. The Tri-Command goal this year was to receive an average yearly donation of \$36 per person ... a \$3 monthly allotment.”

According to Grindle, this year’s fund drive has had mixed results.

Naval Hospital Beaufort has reach 96 percent of its goal, which is more than

\$12,000, while other units have had little participation.

The Society is not only seeking support through monetary donations.

More than 3,000 trained volunteers, both ashore and aboard ships, accomplish the major portion of the Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society’s work.

The Society enjoys an active partnership with the Navy and Marine Corps and benefits extensively from the active involvement of the command structure at the bases where the Society maintains a presence.

“The key to success any office enjoys depends on the volunteer support available,” said Grindle. “Society offices are always on the lookout for ‘special’ individuals who wish to share their experience and knowledge, and have a desire to help others.”

All volunteers are trained in the area they agree to work in and have the opportunity to help people in need, develop new skills and improve their existing talents. They are also reimbursed for transportation and child care expenses for the few hours a week they volunteer.

“We just ask that you support however and whenever you can,” said Grindle. “Worldwide, more than 40,000 Marines, sailors and their families, whether active duty or retired, have benefited from the generosity of those that have supported the Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society.”

For more information on supporting the NMCRS, contact the Parris Island office at 228-3512, or on the Web at [www.nmcrs.org](http://www.nmcrs.org).

## Month of the Military Child ...



Staff Sgt. Benjamin N. Haynes  
**Firepup 1 from the Beaufort Fire Department greets children at the 2004 Kidfest April 3 at the Cross Creek Shopping Plaza. The Beaufort Fire Department was one of many local agencies that helped celebrate Month of Military Child and National Child Abuse Prevention Month.**

## VIDEO, Continued from Page 1

learn what a board is all about, and basically understand the process.

“The intent behind the videos is to de-mystify the promotion board process,” he said. “We want Marines to know how it works, and show that it’s not a big, smokey room. It’s fair, and all Marines are getting an equal shot at promotion.”

The third video, The Performance Evaluation Syst-

em, gives a detailed review of how information is displayed on a Master Brief Sheet and provides great detail on Relative Value.

“This video is a verbatim production of the brief given by [the Personnel Management Support Branch] to all promotion boards,” said Gillis. “This is probably the greatest utility for [reporting seniors] and [reviewing officers], as well as Marines. It helps understand how the marks on the FitReps

affect those before a promotion board.”

The videos are available on the Marine Corps University’s College of Continuing Education’s Web site at [www.marinenet.usmc.millibrary/reference](http://www.marinenet.usmc.millibrary/reference) or through the promotion section homepage, [www.usmc.mil/marinelink/mcn2000.nsf/promo](http://www.usmc.mil/marinelink/mcn2000.nsf/promo).

“This process is not a secret,” said Gillis. “Be involved, know how the process works, ask questions.”

## RIPLEY, Continued from Page 1

explosives it took to destroy that bridge in Dong Ha. He wishes to use those actions to motivate recruits currently undergoing training.

“The intent is to inspire young recruits -- to let them know that even though it may feel as though the world is caving in and they’re not capable of doing a dog gone thing, that everything the Marine Corps does for you has a definite application,” he said.

Ripley believes that all of the skills acquired will pay off for recruits much the same as they did for him.

“Eventually it will make you better in everything,” he said. “Not just as a Marine, but in your attitude, your value to your country and all of those terribly important values that the Marine Corps teaches.”

Those values and lessons learned are already making an impact on the Depot as service members are anticipating the arrival of the print.

“[1st Battalion personnel] have already been calling and asking where it will be placed so they can come look at it,” said Lt. Col. Keith L. Cieri, commanding officer, 1st RTBn.

**“Colonel Ripley is a hero and he carries on the legacy of the Marine Corps. [His heroism is more of a modern influence] for those who have not been in as long as some of us old timers.”**  
- Lt. Col. Keith L. Cieri, commanding officer, 1st RTBn.

“I just wanted to bring it to whoever was supposed to get it and have it displayed in my old battalion. It really is meant to be for any Marine recruit, and the message is: If I can do it, you can certainly do it.”

That motivation is something that Ripley found during his stint at recruit training 47 years ago.

“Every recruit has those moments when he says, ‘what have I done. I will never be as good as the Marines who are teaching me are, I’ll never be as good as the Marines of World War II, Korea, Vietnam or Desert Storm. I don’t possess the same qualities,’ and yet, you do. You just haven’t had an opportunity to exercise them yet. Once you do, you find out you are every bit as good as they were. The inspiration of those former Marines is what makes us that good.”

Giving inspiration is what Ripley planned on doing during his visit; however, he had not planned on receiving any. Even though he did not expect it, he did receive inspiration in the form of a guidon from his former recruit training platoon.

“It was a huge surprise getting the guidon,” said Ripley. “I reflect on what my drill instructors would say if they saw me getting this incredible honor. It has meaning that only a Marine could appreciate. Every time you go someplace they give you a nice memento. I must have 500 pictures of the Naval Academy Chapel, but this one [is very special].”